

Remarks on the Last Flight of Air Force One Tail Number 27000 in Waco, Texas

August 29, 2001

Any Air Force plane carrying the President bears the name Air Force One. This plane, tail number 27000, wore the name of Air Force One for 444 missions and more than 1 million miles. Today this plane carried a President for the last time, and soon it will be taking its last flight. It will carry no more Presidents, but it will carry forever the spirit of American democracy.

Tail number 27000 entered the service of the United States in December 1972 and first served President Richard Nixon and then President Ford. It flew former President Carter and former President—Vice President Mondale to Germany to greet 52 Americans who had been held hostage in Iran. My father flew it frequently, but the President who used it the most was Ronald Reagan. It was from this plane that President Reagan disembarked in Berlin in 1987 and demanded, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

And none of those flights would have been possible without the skill and commitment of the air crews of old 27000. For almost three decades, the pilot and crew of tail number 27000 have performed flawlessly, for not only Presidents but Vice Presidents and Cabinet Secretaries and Members of Congress. I’m delighted that former crew members can be with us today.

Ralph Albertazzie, President Nixon’s pilot, is here; Colonel Bob Ruddick, the pilot for President Ronald Reagan; Danny Barr, who flew my dad; Chief Master Sergeant Joe Chappell, he was the chief flight engineer who rode the plane on its original voyage from the Boeing factory to Andrews Air Force Base; Chief Master Sergeant Charles Palmer; Chief Master Sergeant Denny Stump; Chief Master Sergeant Kim Johnson; Chief Master Sergeant Tim Kerwin; Chief Master Sergeant John Haigh; and of course, the man who flies me, Colonel Mark Tillman.

Between you, you have served seven Presidents, and you have served your Nation well. Thanks to you, American history has been a little less turbulent than it might have been.

Tail number 27000 flew two Presidents back home from Washington to California; it carried Richard Nixon in 1974 and Ronald Reagan in 1989. And today it will follow its distinguished passengers to its own retirement in California. A new hangar will be built for 27000 at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California. Visitors will soon be able to tour this aircraft. It will remind us of Ronald Reagan’s achievements for peace and international security and permanently symbolize the soaring spirit of this great man and our great country. Soon it will take its final flight westward into history.

Thank you all for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. at Texas State Technical College Waco. In his remarks, he referred to former General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 7459—National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 2001

August 30, 2001

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Ovarian cancer, the deadliest of the gynecologic cancers, is the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States. Experts predict that more than 23,000 cases will be diagnosed in 2001, with an estimated 13,900 women dying from the disease this year.

Ovarian cancer is very treatable when detected early, but only 25 percent of ovarian cancer cases in the United States are diagnosed in the early stages. The vast majority of cases are not diagnosed until the cancer has spread beyond the ovaries, often because symptoms are easily confused with other diseases and because no reliable, easily administered screening tool exists.

When the disease is diagnosed in advanced stages, the chance of 5-year survival is only about 25 percent. Currently, 50 percent of